



# Policy 1006

Subject

## SHOTSPOTTER GUNSHOT DETECTION SERVICE - PILOT

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*By Order of the Police Commissioner*

### POLICY

1. **Data-Informed Policing.** It shall be the policy of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) to properly utilize the ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection Service to enhance the Department's ability to respond to and investigate violent crimes and incidents involving gunfire.
2. **Deepen Community Trust.** The ShotSpotter system allows members to respond to all incidents of gunfire detected within the acoustic Coverage Area without awaiting a call for service. Consistent response by members will deepen trust and collaboration between the Department and communities affected by gun violence.
3. **Accountability.** Department members will investigate any ShotSpotter alerts following established standards of member safety, investigative protocol, and evidence recovery.

### DEFINITIONS

**Coverage Area** — A defined perimeter where ShotSpotter sensors can reliably triangulate incidents of gunfire.

**Detailed Forensic Report** — A report produced by ShotSpotter at the request of the Criminal Investigative Division that includes detailed information of a ShotSpotter incident, including: the number of rounds fired, the number of shooters involved, and the direction and speed of a shooter-in-motion.

**Enhanced Incident Report** — Investigative reports that may be produced through the Investigator Portal within 72 hours of an incident that includes: a map with the location of the alert, location information, and audio from the sensors that created the alert.

**Incident Review Center (IRC)** — When a sound triggers the ShotSpotter sensor, audio data is sent to the Incident Review Center for verification. Once qualified as a firearms discharge, the event is pushed to the ShotSpotter Respond Application (on browser and mobile devices) and the ShotSpotter Dispatch Application for member dispatch and investigation. The verification process takes less than a minute.

**Investigator Portal** — The Investigator Portal (IP) archives information and data pertaining to each gunfire and non-gunfire-related incident captured by the system. Data is stored on the Investigator Portal for up to 7 years, and can be used to run custom reports and to support active investigations.

**Respond to the Dot** — ShotSpotter directs members to respond to incidents of gunfire, which are represented on the ShotSpotter Respond Application as a dot. The dot is a precise location, with corresponding latitude and longitude coordinates, and will include an 82 foot radius for locating victims, evidence, witnesses, and crime scene management.

**ShotSpotter Dispatch Application** — The ShotSpotter Dispatch Application is available on web browsers via URL. This tool provides real-time gunshot alerts to the Communications Section to dispatch members to the alerts. The application allows members to acknowledge and close alerts, assign CAD numbers, and add details to incidents.

**ShotSpotter Gunshot Detection Service** — Technology that detects outdoor audible gunfire within the Coverage Area through the use of acoustic sensors capable of pinpointing a gunfire event.

**ShotSpotter Respond Application** — The ShotSpotter Respond Application is available on both departmental phones as an application, and web-based on mobile data computers (MDCs) via <https://respond.shotspotter.com>. This tool provides real-time gunshot alerts to patrol and investigative personnel in a mobile device format.

## **GENERAL**

1. The ShotSpotter Gunfire Detection Service uses audio sensors placed in a Coverage Area to identify the location of gunfire, and transmits that information to an Incident Review Center (IRC) for validation.
2. Once confirmed by the IRC as gunfire, the alert is sent directly to members via the ShotSpotter Respond Application and to the ShotSpotter Dispatch Application.
3. Members may self-dispatch to the alert or Communications may dispatch calls for service based on the alert.
4. Response to all ShotSpotter alerts shall be regarded as a **Priority 1**, in progress call.
5. Members shall complete a Crime Incident Report on all ShotSpotter initiated calls when there is evidence collected or a crime is committed.

## **DIRECTIVES**

### **Responding to ShotSpotter Incidents – Member, Patrol Division**

1. Members shall log-in to the ShotSpotter Respond Application on the mobile data computer (MDC), desktop computer, and/or their departmental mobile phone at the beginning of their tour of duty.
2. When a ShotSpotter alert notification is received, the closest available mobile unit may self-dispatch and Respond to the Dot. Members who self-dispatch must make verbal radio notification to their Dispatcher.

3. Responding members will treat ShotSpotter alerts as a **Priority 1**, in-progress call, and will take a safe and strategic approach to the incident, bearing in mind that the suspect may still be armed and on scene.
4. When safe to do so, responding members shall secure as much of the 82 foot perimeter around the “Dot” as possible, per their preliminary investigative responsibilities in Policy 1008, *Investigative Operations*.
5. Members may be assigned by the Communications Section to re-canvass ShotSpotter incidents that occurred within the previous 24 hours where:
  - 5.1. No evidence was located,
  - 5.2. No contact with witnesses or involved persons was made during the initial response, and
  - 5.3. No gunfire was confirmed.

### **Reporting ShotSpotter Incidents**

1. Members shall include the following information when reporting founded ShotSpotter calls for service in a Crime Incident Report:
  - 1.1. Incident location,
  - 1.2. Number of casings found,
  - 1.3. Victim information,
  - 1.4. Firearm(s) recovered,
  - 1.5. Any property damage due to a discharge, and
  - 1.6. Number of persons arrested and the arrest location, if applicable.
2. Members shall document casings in place with their body-worn camera.
3. Any casings recovered on the scene of a ShotSpotter incident shall be considered evidentiary.
4. Casings shall be recovered and submitted to the Evidence Control Section at headquarters in accordance with Policy 1401, *Control of Property and Evidence*.
5. Members shall notify the Communications Shift Commander (410-396-2284) of the above information for appropriate closure of the alert.
  - 5.1. When no evidence of a discharging or witnesses are found, members shall provide the oral code of DN.

5.2. When witness statements and/or personal observation determine that the alert was **not** triggered by a firearms discharge, members shall provide the oral code of AN and include a brief comment to their Dispatcher as to the cause of the alert.

### **Reporting False Alerts and Misses**

1. Members who respond to a ShotSpotter alert that is confirmed to be a false activation (e.g., fireworks, construction equipment) are not required to fulfill the above reporting requirements, and shall provide their Dispatcher with the oral code AN, including a brief comment as to the cause of the alert, and inform [admin.shotspotter@baltimorepolice.org](mailto:admin.shotspotter@baltimorepolice.org) that the incident was a false alert.
2. Members shall inform [admin.shotspotter@baltimorepolice.org](mailto:admin.shotspotter@baltimorepolice.org) in the event of a discharging incident that occurs within the Coverage Area, but does not activate an alert. Members shall include the time and location of the discharging or evidence of a discharging that was discovered.
3. If an incident of gunfire occurs outside the Coverage Area, members may request ShotSpotter to check audio from the nearest sensors within 72 hours of the event. Requests should be made to [admin.shotspotter@baltimorepolice.org](mailto:admin.shotspotter@baltimorepolice.org).

**NOTE:** Prompt reporting of false alerts and misses allows ShotSpotter to improve their technology and/or identify faulty sensors.

### **REQUIRED ACTION**

#### **Supervisor**

1. Respond to ShotSpotter incidents.
2. Upon arrival at ShotSpotter incidents, ensure that the responding members are professionally and appropriately performing their preliminary investigative responsibilities, and provide guidance and direction as needed.
3. Ensure members perform a re-canvass for all ShotSpotter incidents re-opened by the Communications Section.
4. Review all Incident Reports for accuracy and completeness, and ensure that all items of evidentiary value are properly documented and collected.

#### **Communications Section**

1. Dispatch ShotSpotter calls for service based on alerts received through the ShotSpotter Dispatch Application (see Policy 701, *Departmental Radio Communications*).
2. Citywide Dispatch shall notify the appropriate District Dispatcher of any ShotSpotter alerts received through the application to assign an available unit.
3. Assign a CAD number to the alert within the ShotSpotter Dispatch Application.

4. Assist members to Respond to the Dot by providing descriptive reference to the location of the incident (e.g., on the sidewalk directly in front of..., in the back yard of..., near the north fence line of...).
5. Create an on-view for call type 83S and include all descriptive reference to the location of the incident in the comment field.
6. Close the call with a disposition of AN, DN, or XN/Y and duplicate all related calls for service.
7. Day-work Shift Commander shall review all 83S from the previous 24 hours (0700-0659), and re-open for area re-canvass where appropriate.
8. Dispatcher shall assign an available unit for re-canvass.
9. Shift Commander shall collect and enter ShotSpotter incident details into the appropriate database.

**Criminal Investigation Division**

1. Members assigned to investigative units shall utilize the Investigator Portal to access detailed historical data related to ShotSpotter incidents.
2. Enhanced Incident Reports are available within 24 hours after an incident and may be printed through the Investigator Portal. These reports include:
  - 2.1. A map including the location of the alert, and
  - 2.2. Audio from sensors that participated in creating the alert that can be downloaded and saved.
3. Upon request, ShotSpotter will provide Detailed Forensic Reports that help to reveal and clarify:
  - 3.1. The number of rounds fired,
  - 3.2. Possibly the number of shooters involved, and
  - 3.3. Possibly the direction and speed of a shooter-in-motion incident.
4. Requests for Detailed Forensic Reports shall be forwarded by email to [dfr.shotspotter@baltimorepolice.org](mailto:dfr.shotspotter@baltimorepolice.org) and shall include:
  - 4.1. The incident's Flex ID #,
  - 4.2. Location and CC #.

**NOTE:** Detailed Forensic Reports may take several weeks to be compiled and delivered. Due to their labor-intensive nature, Detailed Forensic Reports are generally intended for investigations of homicides, police officer-involved shootings, and high-profile shootings.

If an investigation goes to trial, Detailed Forensic Reports are required in order for ShotSpotter to provide expert witness testimony.

### Evidence Control Section

1. Confirm whether the evidence was collected from a ShotSpotter incident.
2. Receive evidence and accompanying Form 56 from ShotSpotter incidents per unit policies and procedures, and properly classify evidence from ShotSpotter incidents using the NCIC designation of Y/SSpot.

### ASSOCIATED POLICIES

Policy 701, *Departmental Radio Communications*  
Policy 824, *Body-Worn Cameras*  
Policy 1008, *Investigative Operations*  
Policy 1401, *Control of Property and Evidence*

### COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

This policy is effective on the date listed herein. Each employee is responsible for complying with the contents of this policy.